



City of Arts & Innovation

PRESS RELEASE

Police Department
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICERS SAVE LIVES

RIVERSIDE, CA – Today while reviewing various police department activities, I was struck by the continued outstanding work, the men and women of the Riverside Police Department do on a daily basis. Actions on the part of our officers save lives and many times give people struggling with very difficult life issues a second chance at life. Far too often these actions go overlooked or are considered routine. These actions are anything but routine; they are in fact extraordinary and greatly impact our community. I don't often issue a press release myself; today I do so in recognition of the men and women of the Riverside Police Department and the lifesaving work they do. Below I share a short synopsis of four examples of what I am referring to. All four of these events occurred within a 10-hour time period. Because of the fine work of Riverside Police officers, at least four people are alive today who might have otherwise perished. To say that I am proud is a gross understatement.

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 7:04 a.m.

Patrol Officers Joe Ili, Dennis Causey, Andrew Leyva, Felix Medina, Phillip Sears, Javier Cabrera and Detective Brandy Merrill, as well as officers from METRO, the Neighborhood Policing Center and Traffic, responded to a residence in the 3900 block of Stratton regarding a despondent adult male, armed with a firearm and refusing to come out of his bedroom. The subject's grandmother called the police because she was concerned for his welfare and for her safety. METRO Officer Dawson Smith established containment and an emergency rescue team using on-duty METRO officers. Officers Medina and Leyva established cell phone contact with the subject and negotiated with him. School Resource Officers Gioconda Hychko and Alfonso



Navar responded to McAuliffe Elementary School to assist with a modified lock-down of the campus. The subject eventually exited his residence and was safely taken into custody by officers without incident. Officer Causey located a shotgun inside the residence.

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 11:14 a.m.

A passerby witnessed a female attach a rope to a tree branch in the gated community park near Silk Oak Drive and Mt. Wasatch Drive. As Officers James Heiting and David Lim quickly arrived on scene, they located the female hanging from the tree by a rope. Officer Heiting grabbed the subject by her lower legs and held her up, while Officer Lim used his knife to cut the rope. The Riverside Fire Department and American Medical Response responded and transported the semi-conscious female to Riverside Community Hospital. The 19 year-old female was transported to the hospital for treatment and a mental health evaluation. According to medical staff, had the officers not intervened when they did, the prognosis for her recovery would have been dramatically different. Because of the officers' quick and effective response, the young lady is expected to recover.

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 1:29 p.m.

Patrol Officers Nellie Nakamura, Ramon Espinosa, Cristina Arangure and their supervisor responded to a residence in the 1100 block of Orange Street to regarding an adult male armed with a knife and threatening to commit suicide. Family members were present at the residence and greeted the arriving officers in the driveway of the residence. As the officers began to speak to the females, a male subject quickly walked out of the residence with a knife in his hand, threatening to kill himself. The male began to take steps towards the officers. The officers engaged the subject in conversation and convinced him to drop the knife. The subject was taken for a mental health evaluation.

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 4:52 p.m.

As part of the Traffic Bureau's on-going commitment to traffic safety, members of the unit conducted an enforcement detail at the crosswalk located on Indiana at Winstrom. Utilizing a traffic officer in plain-clothes crossing the street in the marked crosswalk, Motor Officer Tim Roy observed a clear violation. After a vehicle nearly struck the officer in the intersection, an enforcement stop was conducted. When Officer Roy contacted the driver, he could clearly smell a strong odor of marijuana coming from inside the vehicle. The driver admitted to smoking marijuana 20 minutes before. He said that he was on his way to pick up his daughter from pre-school! Officer Roy, who is a drug recognition expert, observed the clear objective symptoms that the driver was under the influence and driving while impaired. The driver was taken into custody and no one, including his daughter, was injured.

The actions of the officers above are real life examples of our motto, "A Force for Good."

Sergio G. Diaz
Chief of Police